

Music Knows No Borders at The Soraya (VPAC)**The Classic 1950's Cuban Sound Joyously Comes to Life When
Juan de Marcos and the Afro-Cuban All-Stars
Make Debut at The Soraya
Harold López-Nussa Trio opens the evening****Friday, January 19 at 8:00pm**

(Los Angeles, CA December 20, 2017) The electrifying Afro-Cuban All-Stars, under the guidance of legendary Juan de Marcos, pay tribute to Cuba's golden age of music when the band makes its debut at The Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for the Performing Arts (The Soraya) on Friday, January 19. Mixing the joy and melancholy for Cuba's past with the exuberant sounds of contemporary performance, the 17-piece Afro-Cuban All-Stars bring the next generation of Cuban music to life on stage. In addition, the evening will also feature The Soraya debut of the Havana-based Harold López-Nussa Trio, which will open the evening.

"Is there a better way to celebrate the New Year than with the joyous sounds of the Afro-Cuban All-Stars and the Harold Lopez Nussa Trio?," said Thor Steingraber, Executive Director of The Soraya (formerly known as Valley Performing Arts Center). "This season we celebrate music from 14 different countries with our Music Knows No Borders series. Not only do the All-Stars bring music from beyond our borders but also from multiple generations of past artists who still influence us today."

About the Afro-Cuban All-Stars

The Afro-Cuban All-Stars are perhaps best known for their Grammy Award-nominated record *A Toda Cuba le Gusta* and their Grammy Award-winning record *Buena Vista Social Club*. The inspiration for both came from Cuba's rich cultural and musical history. Members of the band past and present include Rubèn González, Orlando "Cachaito" López, Ibrahim Ferrer, Félix Baloy, and Pedro Calvo.

The band is led by founder Juan de Marcos who originally started the Afro-Cuban All Stars as a tribute project honoring the golden era greats of Cuban music during the height of Cuban tourism. During this time de Marco met legendary American guitarist and producer Ry Cooder, and the two collaborated with World Circuit Records to promote Cuban culture and music. This collaboration came at the height of Cuba's popularity, when tourism to the country was at its peak and clubs such as the Buena Vista Social Club captivated the social scene. One of the most popular attractions was the Buena Vista Social Club, an institution that inspired a band, an album, and a movie of the same name.

The ensemble captures the undeniable spirit of Afro-Cuban music with the potent mix of driving percussion, a powerhouse horn section, with piano, bass, tres, guitar and incomparable vocals. The current line-up of ACAS consists of the finest Cuban expatriate musicians in the world today, all alumni of Cuba's greatest bands. The Afro-Cuban All Stars electrifying performance pays tribute to Cuba's popular music marrying the past with the present in the grandeur and grace of the world's greatest orchestras.

Tickets for Afro-Cuban All-Stars, priced from \$33-\$68, are now available at ValleyPerformingArtsCenter.org or by calling (818) 677-3000. Valley Performing Arts Center is located on the campus of California State University, Northridge (CSUN), [18111 Nordhoff Street Northridge, CA 91330-8448](http://18111NordhoffStreetNorthridge,CA91330-8448), at the corner of Nordhoff

and Lindley.

About Juan de Marcos

Juan de Marcos was born in Havana in 1954 and grew up surrounded by music (his father was a singer and played with the great Arsenio Rodriguez, among others). He studied classical guitar at the Havana Conservatory and privately with the great maestros Vicente Gonzalez and Leopoldina Nunez. Also contemporary harmony and orchestral conducting. Later, at university, he turned to studying Hydraulic Engineering and Russian and English Languages before working as a consultant at the Agronomic Science Institute, gaining his doctorate in 1989.

While at university he co-founded the group Sierra Maestra in 1976. Styled as a traditional Cuban septeto group (tres, trumpet, bass, percussion, and ariid vocals), the dynamic young band's aim was to bring about an appreciation of Cuban son by the youth of the island. The band achieved great success, recording fourteen albums in Cuba, Africa and Europe, touring many countries and receiving various awards.

In 1994, Juan de Marcos began his association with the London-based record label World Circuit, when the band recorded the album 'Dundunbanza'. For this recording, World Circuit's Nick Gold encouraged the group to expand their line-up to include piano, congas and a trumpet section in tribute to the forties and fifties styles of silagra Arsenio Rodriguez. Having found both success and a common ground, Juan de Marcos and Gold looked to develop them further with a big band recording in Havana, featuring the neglected stars of the 'golden age' of Cuban music (the 50s).

The Afro-Cuban All Stars album *A toda Cuba le gusta* (Grammy Nominee '98) was the first to be recorded in the now famous Buena Vista Social Club sessions and Juan de Marcos proved to be a springboard for the success that came up. Following the albums' release, Juan de Marcos led Afro-Cuban All Stars and Ruben Gonzalez Ensemble on their debut European and U.S. tours and directed the Buena Vista Social Club in the only concerts of the original line up at the top theatres 'Le Carre' in Amsterdam, New York's Carnegie Hall and Mexico's Auditorio Nacional.

Having been instrumental in these various projects Juan de Marcos is set to move into the limelight with his new projects and ambitious new ideas. "We have to use all the heritage of Cuban music to create a sound of the future" says Juan de Marcos "it's important to have that continuity and fight for our identity".

About the Harold Lopez-Nussa Trio

Havana based composer and pianist HAROLD LÓPEZ-NUSSA is a musician whose musical voice is now being heard around the world. *El Viaje* (The Journey), López-Nussa's recent debut release on Mack Avenue Records, visits many genres of music and travels smoothly between Harold's classical, native and jazz inspirations. Soon after release, the album reached No. 1 on iTunes Jazz Chart and No. 2 on Amazon's Jazz Chart. The recording features The Harold López-Nussa Trio with younger brother Ruy López-Nussa on drums and percussion, himself a star in the distinguished López-Nussa Family of renowned Cuban musicians. Recent performances at The Montreux, Monterey, Montreal and Tokyo Jazz Festivals; The Kennedy Center; and The San Francisco Jazz Center have fortified Harold's reputation as a profound musician of rising stature who has fully integrated his classical training and love of the jazz continuum with his Cuban roots and soul.

"Pianist Harold López-Nussa is the latest in a line of extraordinary keyboardists to emerge from Cuba." – *DownBeat*

Music Knows No Borders Series

A musical melting pot comes to the Valley Performing Arts Center (The Soraya) this season, in more than 20 different performances. Curated by Thor Steingraber, The Soraya's Executive Director, the *Music Knows No Borders* events are inventive and bold, infectious and pulsating; putting a positive spin on current geopolitical themes such as migration, race, and religion. The digital age inspires musicians from every corner of the globe, delivering an endless expanse of musical styles, and inspiring innovation and fusion. More than ever before, global artists command a platform to spread their message of cultural unity and social activism. "At The Soraya we give voice to the musical diasporas," said Steingraber. "We are committed to a simple idea—the concert hall is an inviting and inclusive place. The communal joy of music

and dance is immediate, intergenerational, and accessible. After all, ears know no borders. Hands clap and feet stomp regardless of nation-of-origin, religion, or cultural background.”

About the Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for the Performing Arts (The Soraya)

The Soraya opened its 2017-2018 season on September 16 with a performance of *AMADEUS Live* (Milos Foreman’s 1984 Academy Award-winning Best Picture with live orchestra) with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and members of the LA Opera Chorus. The evening honored the Younes and Soraya Nazarian Foundation in recognition of the family’s recent \$17 million gift that will rename VPAC as the Younes and Soraya Nazarian Performing Arts Center, known as The Soraya. The gift is one of the largest in the history of the California State University and the system’s largest single gift to support the arts; gift to support the programming and operations of the award-winning Valley Performing Arts Center – which has become one of the cultural jewels of the region in the six years since it opened.

The 2017-18 Soraya season signals a new era for the premier event venue. Under the leadership of Executive Director Thor Steingraber, the renamed Younes and Soraya Nazarian Performing Arts Center expands its programming and outstanding multidisciplinary performances. The mission of The Soraya is to present a wide variety of performances that not only includes new and original work from the Los Angeles region but also work from around the world that appeal to all of LA’s rich and diverse communities.

Located on the campus of California State University, Northridge, The Soraya’s season offers a vibrant performance program of nearly 50 classical and popular music, dance, theater, family and international events that will serve to establish The Soraya as the intellectual and cultural heart of the San Fernando Valley, and further establish itself as one of the top arts companies in Southern California. The award-winning, 1,700-seat theatre was designed by HGA Architects and Engineers and was recently cited by the Los Angeles Times as “a growing hub for live music, dance, drama and other cultural events.”

Calendar Listing for Afro-Cuban All-Stars

Date: Friday, January 19 at 8:00pm

Venue: Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for the Performing Arts (The Soraya)
18111 Nordhoff Street, Northridge, CA 91330

Tickets: **Prices:** Starting at \$33. Prices subject to change.
By Phone: (818) 677-3000
Online: ValleyPerformingArtsCenter.org

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